



The Cleveland Museum of Art

June 3, 1994

Contact: Ann Edwards

CENTRAL EUROPEAN PRINTS BETWEEN THE WARS

July 13 - August 28, 1994

Central European Prints Between the Wars, an exhibition of rarely shown etchings, wood engravings, and other prints created between 1915 and 1940 by Hungarian, Czech, and Polish artists, many virtually unknown outside their native countries, will be exhibited from July 13 to August 28 in the Museum's Prints and Drawings Gallery 109. The thirty-five prints in the exhibition, drawn from the Museum's collection, include landscapes, scenes of rural life, portraits, and religious subjects. Twenty-five are by Hungarian artists, most given to the Museum by the United Hungarian Societies of Cleveland in 1925, with a few given by The Magyar Club of Cleveland in the 1930s. Sabine Kretzschmar, curatorial assistant in the Department of Prints and Drawings, selected these prints to complement the exhibition **Nineteenth-Century German, Austrian, and Hungarian Drawings from Budapest**, installed in adjacent galleries.

Most of the prints, although influenced by contemporary artistic trends, are in a conservative style; among a few by avant-garde artists are abstract compositions by László Moholy-Nagy and Sándor Bortnyik. Etching was a favorite means of expression for many of the Hungarian artists represented. The technique was used by Vilmos Aba-Novák for his self-portrait, István Szőnyi for scenes of rural life, and Gyula Derkovits, whose expressionistic work, Lamenting the Dead, mourns the losses of World War I. Pál Molnár's wood engravings of religious scenes reflect traditional artistic styles and subjects, as does Gyula Conrad's wood engraving of a room in a Hungarian home.

Wood engraving was the preferred medium of the Czech symbolist František Kobliha, who used it to dramatic effect in two boldly designed and imaginative prints, Riders to the Sea and Meditation. Max Švabinský, a leading Czech printmaker known for his landscapes and portraits, created a finely detailed woodcut portrait of the Czech painter Josef Manes. Also shown are three drypoints by Jolan Gross Bettleheim, a Czech-born American artist who studied in Budapest and worked in Cleveland from 1925 to 1938. Two of her prints--one depicting the bridges and landmarks of downtown Cleveland--were exhibited in the Museum's annual May Shows of works by Cleveland artists during the 1930s.

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Press Release



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**NINETEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN, AUSTRIAN, AND HUNGARIAN
DRAWINGS FROM BUDAPEST**
July 13 - August 28, 1994

Ninety-six of the finest drawings and watercolors from the splendid collections of two of Hungary's most important museums--the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts and the Hungarian National Gallery--will be exhibited to American audiences for the first time at The Cleveland Museum of Art from July 13 to August 28, 1994. **Nineteenth-Century German, Austrian, and Hungarian Drawings from Budapest** explores the richness and complexity of the period between 1790 and the early twentieth century. The exhibition presents a variety of important drawings representing a broad range of European artistic movements--including Neoclassicism, Romanticism, the Nazarenes, the Biedermeier style, and Realism. Landscapes, portraits, historical and mythological subjects, and scenes of everyday life are rendered in quick sketches, academic studies, preparatory designs for larger compositions, and highly finished drawings.

The exhibition was organized by Art Services International, Alexandria, Virginia. Following its premiere in Cleveland, it will travel to the University Art Museum, the University of California at Berkeley (September 7 - November 6, 1994) and the Frick Art Museum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (November 22, 1994 - January 8, 1995).

Historical Background

The map of Europe was redrawn and the influence of the Hapsburg empire dramatically increased with the end of the Napoleonic Wars and the peace treaty concluded with the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Hapsburg power was stable, conservative, even repressive, and discontent grew until "bourgeois" revolutions fanned across Central and Eastern Europe in 1848. Those revolutions failed to win the liberal and nationalist concessions they sought, but nationalist, liberal, and radical sentiments continued to gather force. One of the many compromises reached during the subsequent half-century created the state officially named Austria-Hungary in 1867.

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The Exhibition

The late 18th- and early 19th-centuries, when the earliest works in this exhibition were created, has often been described by German art historians as "Goethe's period." The German poet Wolfgang von Goethe, who had seriously considered art as a career and was convinced that "everyone must be able to draw," admired both Neoclassicism and Romanticism and embraced both styles. He encouraged his protégés to study classical art while promoting the ideas of the great German Romantic painter, Caspar David Friedrich. Goethe collected works by several German artists represented in this exhibition, such as Joseph Bergler and Friedrich Preller, who depict scenes from the Iliad and the Odyssey, and Franz Kobell, who created poetic, ideal landscapes in the manner of the 17th-century French master Claude Lorrain.

After the French Revolution, when Paris was considered unsafe, Vienna grew in importance as an art center, its rich art collections and its Academy attracting many young artists. At the Academy, a conservative institution committed to the principles of Neoclassicism, students learned to draw by copying engravings of the works of old masters and plaster casts of antique sculptures, before progressing to live models. The "Nazarenes," a group of young artists dissatisfied with Neoclassicism and the Academy's teaching methods, who believed that art should serve moral and religious purposes, moved to Rome where they emulated the forms and subjects of late medieval and early Renaissance art. Their linear drawing style is exemplified in works by German artists Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld and Edward von Steinle.

Throughout the 19th century German and Austrian artists flocked to Italy, and especially Rome, to study its ancient monuments and great works of art and to record the beauty of its scenery. Of the few Hungarian artists who traveled there, Károly Markó, known as the Hungarian Claude Lorrain, is most important. Three of his idyllic sunlit depictions of the Italian countryside are included in this show.

Caspar David Friedrich, represented in the exhibition by a light-filled pen and ink drawing, Seashore with Fishing Boats, never traveled to Italy, finding inspiration for his imaginative and mystic landscapes in desolate locales in northern Germany. The Romantic approach to landscape is also seen in the watercolors of the Hungarian artist Károly Lajos Libay, whose distant view of the city of Regensburg on the Danube River is a freely rendered representation of a momentary experience, rather than a landscape carefully composed according to academic standards.

The long period of stability between the Congress of Vienna in 1815 and the revolutions of 1848 fostered the growth of a wealthy middle class who liked portraits, realistic landscapes, and

scenes--often sentimental--of everyday life. The art produced in Central Europe during this period is called Biedermeier, after a fictional character in a German satirical journal who personified middle class values, and suggests simple, unpretentious tastes.

The Austrian painter Josef Kriehuber, one of the outstanding portrait artists of the time, documented Austrian and Hungarian society in hundreds of watercolor portraits. His charming portrait of Kajetán Erdödy's eight children exemplifies a type of group portraiture especially popular in the Biedermeier period because of its emphasis on family life. Other noteworthy portraits are the Austrian artist Friedrich Lieder's sensitive watercolors of himself and his artist son and the Hungarian artist Gábor Melegh's finely modeled chalk drawing of the youthful Countess Gabriella Károlyi in a feathered hat and fur-collared dress.

During this era of rising patriotism, views of native scenery and historical sites became increasingly popular. The Austrian artist Jacob Alt's series of watercolors depicting the landscape and historic buildings of the Austro-Hungarian Empire were reproduced in albums of prints; two examples of his original watercolors for these projects, including a picturesque view of the castle of Arva, are in the exhibition. His son Rudolf's detailed watercolors of the buildings and monuments of the old cities of Buda and Pest, five of which are in the show, were also published as prints.

Two other beautiful landscapes dating from this period are by the Hungarian artist Miklós Barabás: a loosely brushed, atmospheric watercolor of Italy's Lake Maggiore and a detailed scene of fashionably dressed vacationers strolling on the grounds of Bad Gräfenberg, a mountain retreat in Hungary. Barabás was well known for his genre paintings; one of the most attractive of these is a portrait of his wife, her back to the viewer, painting at a table by a window. The motif of an artist working by a window, reminiscent of 17th-century Dutch painting, was common among Biedermeier painters.

The revolutions of 1848 presented artists with grimmer subject matter. August von Pettenkofen's watercolors record citizens manning the barricades in Vienna and Hungarian dead being dragged from the battlefield. His depiction of a battle-weary peasant from the town of Szolnok might well symbolize Hungary's lost war of independence.

In the second half of the 19th century, art schools sprang up in many German cities and in Hungary, competing with the established academies in Vienna and Dresden. Hungarian artists who had earlier studied in Vienna and Italy now went to Munich and Düsseldorf, and many ventured to Paris. German, Austrian, and Hungarian painters took an avid interest in art developments in

France, particularly the realism of Gustave Courbet and the naturalistic landscapes of painters working in the village of Barbizon near the Fontainebleau Forest. Hungary's leading realist painter, Mihály Munkácsy, worked mainly in Paris; his friend László Paál, who settled in Barbizon, and Géza Mészöly, who worked mainly in Hungary, created expressive, realistic landscape drawings which reflect the influence of the Barbizon school.

Adolph von Menzel, the great virtuoso of German realism, always kept his pencil and sketchbook at hand to commit all his impressions to paper. Menzel's five pencil drawings in this show--a landscape, portrait, Baroque church interior, and studies of figures and heads--reflect the range of his interests. He often drew subjects close up and from unconventional viewpoints, fragmenting compositions in the manner of the Impressionists. The German artist Max Liebermann, whose works close this show, was also influenced by Impressionism. His black chalk drawings of his wife and daughter at the piano, dated 1894, and a later drawing of a hansom cab cropped to show only the horse's rear quarters, are reminiscent of Degas.

Works in the exhibition were selected by Dr. Teréz Gerszi, curator of prints and drawings at the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts and guest project director for the exhibition, and Dr. Zsuzsa Gonda, assistant curator of prints and drawings at the Museum and the exhibition's guest curator.

The exhibition will be installed in the Museum's Prints and Drawings Galleries.

Lenders

The institutions known today as the Hungarian National Gallery and the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts were, until fairly recently, one entity. Treasures amassed over centuries, including a comprehensive collection of works by Hungarian artists, Egyptian and classical antiquities, Old Master paintings, and European sculpture, prints, and drawings, were all part of the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts that opened to the public in 1906. Extensive damage was done to the museum's antique temple-style building in World War II, however, and restoration efforts included the reorganization and development of various aspects of the collections. A separation of the Hungarian art from the remainder of the collections in 1957 established the Hungarian National Gallery. That institution, housed in Budapest's Royal Palace of Buda, now includes over 70,000 objects demonstrating the development of Hungarian fine arts over the centuries. The Budapest Museum of Fine Arts, having adopted as its mission the collection and exhibition of non-Hungarian art, now includes over 100,000 works.

Catalogue

The 240-page scholarly catalogue which accompanies the exhibition, published by Art~~z~~ Services International, includes 96 full-page color plates, one for each catalogue entry. The catalogue will sell for \$29.95 (softbound edition only) at the Museum Store.

Accompanying Programs

Louise Richards, Chief Curator, Emerita, Department of Prints and Drawings at The Cleveland Museum of Art, will lecture on "Art for Everyone: 19th-Century German, Austrian, and Hungarian Drawings" on Wednesday, July 13, at 7:30 pm in the Museum Recital Hall. Miss Richards originally proposed bringing to the United States an exhibition of 19th-century drawings from Budapest; her conception evolved into the present exhibition.

Nancy McAfee, instructor in the Department of Education and Public Programs, will give talks in the exhibition at 1:30 pm on Wednesday, July 13; Sunday, July 17; Wednesday, August 10; and Sunday, August 14.

Five classic Hungarian films will be shown in the Museum's Gartner Auditorium at 7:30 pm on five Wednesday evenings in August. Films are described on a separate release in this package.

Complementary Exhibition

Central European Prints Between the Wars, an exhibition of woodcuts, wood engravings, and etchings created by Hungarian, Czech, and Polish artists between 1915 and 1940, drawn from the collection of The Cleveland Museum of Art, will be on view concurrently with **Nineteenth-Century German, Austrian, and Hungarian Drawings from Budapest**. A press release on this exhibition is enclosed.

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